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PUBLIC HEALTH REPORTS.

Third annual conference of State and Territorial health officers with the United States Public Health and Marine-Hospital Service.

In accordance with the call issued March 31, 1905 (see Public Health Reports, April 7, 1905), this conference convened at the New Willard Hotel, Washington, at 10 a. m., May 15, 1905. Twenty-two delegates, representing as many States and Territories, were in attendance. Interesting discussions were held upon the national control of leprosy, upon the methods of the spread of typhoid fever, and upon car sanitation.

Prior to the adjournment of the conference, Dr. Edmond Souchon, of New Orleans, introduced the following resolution, which was seconded by Doctor Healy, and adopted by the conference:

Whereas the eradication of plague from California through the united and harmonious efforts of the United States Public Health and Marine-Hospital Service, State and local boards of health, by means of rat extermination and extensive sanitary improvements throughout the affected area, is an accomplished fact: Therefore, be it

Resolved, That this conference of the United States Public Health and Marine-Hospital Service with the State boards of health expresses its entire satisfaction with the methods used and the results obtained.

A full report of the transactions of the conference is in course of preparation.

SUMMARY OF SANITARY REPORTS.

Status and progress of epidemics.

Asiatic cholera.—The area occupied by cholera has not changed since the last summary was prepared of the epidemic status of that disease. In March it was declared in the Dutch East Indies that cholera had ceased to prevail in epidemic form in the Celebes, a fact interesting because of the proximity of the Philippines, free from cholera since March, 1904, to the Celebes, at whose ports packet boats call and which are on a direct trade route between Singapore and Europe.

Yellow fever.—Reports do not indicate that this disease has appeared in any new area. It is not present in any place north of Central

America except Tierra Blanca, a small town 57 miles south of Veracruz, on the Veracruz and Pacific Railroad, where there was only one additional case, a fatal one, for the week ending May 20. From the city of Panama 2 cases were reported on May 13, and in Colon 6 cases and 3 deaths from May 7 to 14.

Bubonic plague.—One of the most important of recent plague notifications is that of the appearance, in the week ending May 13, of four cases of the disease, one fatal, in a tenement house with 30 other occupants at Leith, Scotland, the port of Edinburgh and the terminus of several branch railroads. Energetic precautions were taken in the town and harbor, and since no further cases appeared, the local government board of Scotland, in terms of the international sanitary convention of Paris, 1903, declared the port and burg of Leith to have ceased to be regarded infected with plague. According to the consular report, dated May 17, no vessel had left Leith for any American port since April 25.

Present local official estimates give Leith a population of 81,477. Its foreign trade is mainly with northern Europe, though there is a lively coasting trade and some colonial shipping. The better parts of the town are roomy and modern, but the older quarters are filled with narrow streets and houses in bad repair. The most important outbreak of plague in Scotland was a limited epidemic at Glasgow in 1900. The late summer of the following year was marked by a light recurrence.

Egypt, a country especially exposed to epidemic invasions from the east because of its position on the Suez Canal, has had a total of 23 cases of plague since January 1. During the week ending May 6, 5 cases of plague were registered in all Egypt, 1 at Barchoum-el-Soghra, 1 at Tant-el-Guezirah, 1 at Port Said, and 2 at Kom-el-Atroum, district of Toukh, in the province of Kalioubieh. The last case ashore at Port Said, previous to the one in May, was reported December 29, 1904.

Plague in Port Said, at the Mediterranean entrance to the Suez Canal, where on an average 10 vessels pass every day, is naturally regarded with apprehension, not only because of the transit trade with the canal, but because of its large entrepôt trade and the importance of the port as a coaling station.

At Alexandria a case under treatment was discharged, recovered, May 4. The freedom of Alexandria from quarantinable disease is a great advantage to shipping. It means the removal of restrictions imposed on vessels from a city that controls the chief export trade of Egypt; that has railroad connections with Cairo, and thence with Port Said and Suez; that is the chief commercial outlet of the Sudan through the Nile shipping; and that is regularly visited by steamers of the Messageries Maritimes, Peninsular and Oriental Line, Com-

pagnie de Navigation Marseillaise, Navigazione Generale Italiana, the Russian Odessa Company, and many other companies.

Smallpox.—The grand total of smallpox in the United States since January 1, according to reports received, gives 10,557 cases with 257 deaths, compared with 10,337 cases and 479 deaths for the same period in 1904. It is distributed over 35 States. An official statement has been made by the board of health of the State of Washington that in April the State was free from smallpox for the first time since 1899.

Responding to a request of the board of health of the State of West Virginia for an expert to visit Morgan County, in that State, for the purpose of making the diagnosis of an epidemic prevailing there, Passed Asst. Surg. T. B. McClintic, directed to investigate the disease in conjunction with the local authorities, found that smallpox, introduced it is thought by Italian laborers, made its appearance in Morgan County five months ago, and that about 200 cases have occurred along the Great Cacapon River for 6 or 7 miles, and on the route of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad near the Potomac River and the boundary between Maryland and West Virginia for about 20 miles.

In Brazil, there have been serious epidemics at Rio de Janeiro and Pernambuco during the last few months, and Nietheroy and Para have had numerous cases. In Italy an epidemic prevails in Catania and 260 cases with 56 deaths have been reported in the past six months from Palermo. The prevalence in Sicily is of importance because it has occurred at the period of maximum emigration to the United States. During approximately six months covered by the latest reports, there were about 1,500 deaths from smallpox in Bombay, about 100 in Calcutta, and 610 in Shanghai.

In other foreign countries the distribution of smallpox, though quite general, does not indicate very decidedly wide epidemic prevalence. The small number of cases of smallpox reported from Germany is noticeable, having relation to the general practice of vaccination. All the sixteen cases reported in the German Empire during the week ending April 15, occurred among Russian, Italian, and Macedonian immigrants.

Smallpox is not epidemic in any of the insular possessions of the United States.

GENERAL SANITARY INFORMATION.

Relapsing fever.—The American consul at Moscow, Russia, reports that during the week ending April 22 there were in that city 2 deaths among 38 cases of relapsing fever, and similar reports from Odessa indicate for the fortnight ending May 6, 19 cases and 2 deaths there from the same malady, a disease of which cases have within the past few months occurred in China also, giving new interest to the so-called

spirillum Obermeieri, an organism formerly regarded as a bacterium, but recently relinquished to the zoologists. In the Grand Canary 13 cases were reported in the consular sanitary report for the week ending May 6. The disease is not uncommon in India and Syria, and in April there were cases in Mexico. It has not appeared in the United States since 1869, when there were epidemics in New York and Philadelphia. In America relapsing fever was first seen in 1844 at Philadelphia.

UNITED STATES.

[Reports to the Surgeon-General, Public Health and Marine-Hospital Service.]

Investigation of epidemic smallpox in Morgan County, W. Va.

Passed Assistant Surgeon McClintic reports, May 25, as follows:

In compliance with instructions contained in Bureau letter of the 17th instant, directing me to proceed to Berkeley Springs, Great Cacapon, and Paw Paw, Morgan County, W. Va., for the purpose of assisting in settling the diagnosis of a disease existing in that vicinity and supposed to be smallpox, I have the honor to submit the following report in reference thereto:

I arrived at Berkeley Springs on the 17th instant about 2 p. m., and at once called on the secretary of the local board of health. In consulting with him it was learned that the eruptive disease in question prevailed not at Berkeley Springs, but principally in and around Great Cacapon and in the vicinity of Paw Paw. I proceeded by conveyance the same afternoon to Great Cacapon, where I was met by a member of the State board of health and the local physician who has had charge of most of the cases.

Together we visited a case in a man who had had the disease about 8 days. We unanimously agreed that the disease was a case of smallpox of the discreet variety. The patient was covered with a pustular eruption over his whole body, including his mouth, palms of hands, and soles of feet. He gave a history of having had practically every symptom of smallpox, and particularly the pain in head and back, fever, and the eruption which had passed through the different stages to the formation of pustules, some of which were umbilicated.

The member of the State board of health could not remain longer, but in company with the local physician I saw other cases.

The history of the disease in the next family visited was about as follows: The father was taken sick with an eruptive disease which, at the time I saw him, 13 days after the onset, still showed the marks of the eruption over his entire body. Three days before my visit and 10 days after he was taken sick one of his children developed the same disease, and when I saw the child the rash was coming out. One day before my visit and 12 days after the father was taken sick his wife and only other child were taken with pain in the back and head, nausea, and vomiting, fever, etc., which they both still had at the time of my visit. The rash had not yet appeared. There is no doubt that all 4 were mild cases of smallpox.